

## What will the Loop 202 bury?

[Commentary by Mike Durham](#)

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Is the lot where your kids play baseball on top of a Hohokam ruin bearing priceless historical objects? Do Ahwatukee Foothills high school football fields cover Hohokam buildings?

It just might be the price people pay for living on the south side of South Mountain since 300 B.C.E.

As the Arizona Department of Transportation considers flattening 255 homes to make way for the Loop 202 maybe, just maybe, it is a situation of what goes around comes around.

The Cave Creek Museum site states: "The Pioneer Period begins from 300 B.C.E. through A.D. 550. At this time frame, the Hohokam built small, scattered settlements of mud houses over pits which were shallow. Their 'houses' usually were constructed of pole, brush and mud."

These days we are talking about stucco homes with basements and barbecue pits. All of that is the same and literally just classic upgrades to the Hohokam way of life. Are those 255 homes earmarked for destruction going to be just another layer for another soccer mom 300 years from now to park her version of an SUV?

Representative John McComish sent me a response from Timothy Tait of ADOT and, as best I could interpret, it goes like this:

1. ADOT is conducting a study that includes cultural resources.
2. The study will be available to the public in 2008.
3. The focus of the study is from the Estrella Mountains to South Mountain Park.
4. Compliance with the 1966 National Preservation Act provides opportunity to comment on the study.
5. Four criteria out of 12 (location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, association, and importance to history, architecture, archaeology, engineering or culture) must be met for preservation activity.
6. "ADOT is committed to working in partnership with the community to identify, preserve, protect and, when possible, avoid cultural artifacts and sites," wrote Tait.

My concern is that if you wait for the report to be issued, historical concerns may not be included. The historical concerns, as Mr. Tait notes, do not have to include sites that are over 50 years old. They may be younger.

Don't wait until 2008. If your hikes into the proposed freeway area proved fruitful in finding rock maps or unusual surface lines indicating a canal or a wall, let ADOT know. At least let Sen. Huppenthal or Reps. McComish or Robson be alerted with a copy to ADOT.

Let's all hope that the Environmental Impact Statement "(EIS) on behalf of the Federal Highway Administration" does not pave over the 1,500-year-old Hohokam ancient way of life. It's bad enough we may have lost that history to football fields.

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